

➤ STATE ➤

CIVIC EDUCATION

POLICY
FRAMEWORK



NOVEMBER 2014



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Support for this project was provided by the State Farm Companies.

ECS would like to thank the many Thinkers' Meeting attendees and reviewers who contributed to the ideas presented in this paper.



INTRODUCTION

While many Americans might agree on the importance of preparing young people for democratic life, civic education receives relatively less attention than other school subjects. Student performance on civic assessments reflects the limited focus of schools on civic learning. On the last National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics exam administered, only one third of students scored “proficient” or above in their grasp of basic civic knowledge.¹

In addition to inadequate civic knowledge, a lack of civic engagement and participation likely impacts students’ levels of engagement in schools. According to a 2014 report by Gallup Education, emotional engagement at school is the noncognitive factor that most directly correlates with academic achievement. Yet 45 percent of U.S. students are either “not engaged” or are “actively not engaged.”² Civic education that focuses on the development of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions is critical for academic achievement and engagement, and contributes greatly to the development of career skills.³ The skills and dispositions learned through active civic learning that lead to effective participation in democratic life are the same skills necessary for career success in the 21st century (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity).⁴

Despite this knowledge of the importance of civic engagement and participation for academic achievement, students’ opportunities as a part of school learning are largely determined by socioeconomic status. This “civic empowerment gap” means that students in poorer communities have fewer opportunities to develop the skills and dispositions necessary for full participation in democratic life.⁵

While many individuals and organizations have sought to address the poor condition of civic education, the problem remains acute.⁶ Strong state policies are needed to establish and reinforce the fact that preparation for civic life is equally as important as — and important for — preparation for higher education and careers. In fact, preparation for active citizenship was a foundational principle of public education in America from its beginning, and it is a principle that must be reaffirmed by each generation.

Recently, the Education Commission of the States convened a group of civic education leaders to design a new framework for state policy to support students’ effective participation in civic life. Participants included students, educators, policymakers and other experts. At this meeting, participants helped create a model for education, pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (P-20), which identifies preparation for civic life as a core purpose of schools.

This *State Civic Education Policy Framework* captures the expertise and recommendations of meeting participants and is informed by leading research on civic education. This Framework is intended to guide state policymakers as they address the complexities of preparing students for college, career and civic life. It allows for adaptation to state- and site-specific circumstances and may be adopted in whole or in piecemeal fashion, according to states’ individual circumstances. In addition to the Framework, this document includes examples to demonstrate how current state efforts are leading to significant, positive change in civic education for all students, P-20.

In fact, preparation for active citizenship was a foundational principle of public education in America from its beginning, and it is a principle that must be reaffirmed by each generation.



KEY POLICY ELEMENTS

State policy is critically important to ensuring that every student in every school engages in high-quality civic learning as a part of a comprehensive P-20 educational experience. Effective state policies for civic education need to address the following key elements:

- ★ The *civic mission of schools* in a democratic society is to preserve and enhance democracy by cultivating students' care and concern for their communities and equipping students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to participate effectively in democratic life.
- ★ A revised paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is necessary to achieve the civic mission of schools.
- ★ A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements of instruction:
 - Standards and curricula for civic education at each grade level, P-20.
 - Inquiry-based instruction that results in informed action and demonstration of learning.
 - Integration of civic learning across all academic disciplines.
 - Teachers at all levels and in all courses who are well prepared to be civic educators.
- ★ A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements concerning continuous improvement and accountability:
 - Assessments of student progress toward civic learning outcomes used to measure student performance and inform instructional efforts.
 - Accountability indicators of teacher, school and district performance.
 - Measures of community impact.

A well-thought-out plan for developing and implementing these policy elements is critical for the success of civic education policymaking efforts.



SHIFTING THE PARADIGM

“All students — regardless of race or income, religion or political affiliation — must be prepared for informed, engaged participation in civic and democratic life. The challenges to reaching that ambitious goal are many but so are the rewards for our nation. Now is the crucible moment. Now is the time to advance civic learning and democratic engagement throughout American education.”⁷

A core purpose of education in our society is to preserve and enhance democracy by cultivating students’ care and concern for their communities and equipping students with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in democratic life. The addition of *civic life* to student outcomes is a critical and necessary addition to contemporary education rhetoric and policy efforts. Indeed, education institutions will more completely fulfill their broad purposes when they focus on preparing students for college, career and civic life.

The prevailing paradigm for education, with its nearly exclusive focus on college and career readiness and accountability structures, however, is not well aligned with the civic mission of schools.⁸ A shift in this paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is necessary to achieve this mission. ECS meeting participants outlined a set of shared beliefs that should undergird the educational system, its institutions, practices and outcomes. These shared beliefs include:

- ★ ***Equity for all:*** Regardless of background and social position, students have the right to an education that prepares them for full participation in democratic society.
- ★ ***Youth as a civic asset:*** Youth have critically important perspectives to offer to community improvement efforts. Youth are citizens with full rights and responsibilities and, as such, are expected to make positive contributions to their communities.
- ★ ***Schools as a civic asset:*** Schools contribute greatly to the long-term health of the community by preparing students to be productive citizens. Schools add value to the communities they serve.
- ★ ***Participatory institutional culture:*** Educational institutions ought to be models of the democratic societies — the “real world” — in which students are expected to participate.
- ★ ***Mutual and reciprocal responsibility for schooling:*** Schools, community members, government bodies, parents, families, students and businesses all share responsibility for schooling. Collaboration among these parties is essential for student success.
- ★ ***Fluidity between community and school:*** The doors of the 21st century schoolhouse are more open than in the past. The school and community both have assets that are valuable to each other, and each needs the other to fulfill obligations critical to their own success.
- ★ ***Preparation for democratic participation and development of deliberative character:*** A core purpose of education is to prepare students for participation in democratic processes and institutions through deliberation that is informed, civil, thoughtful, respectful and constructive.
- ★ ***Integration of civic learning throughout education:*** Regardless of subject, educators have an obligation to help students understand how they can apply their knowledge in ways that better serve their communities and their country.
- ★ ***Coordination across all educational levels:*** Standards and curricula should be coordinated across the entire P-20 continuum in order to fully support a pipeline that ensures all students are prepared for college, career and civic life.



Leaders from many levels, including policymakers, educators, students, parents and families, community members and businesses, can act upon these shared beliefs to implement effective policies, instructional strategies and programs for every level in the education continuum from early childhood through postsecondary.

The P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy (following page) represents this revised paradigm for education in which coordination across communities and the pre-K, K-12 and postsecondary systems provides students with the valuable, integrated civic learning opportunities that result in readiness for college, career and civic life for all students.

Built from the ground up, the P-20 Schoolhouse embodies this revised paradigm through a foundation of shared beliefs about an engaging and integrated approach to education that empowers youth. Built upon this foundation are:

- ★ Collaborative efforts by policymakers, community members, parents and families, and youth that help to shape instructional approaches and opportunities for civic learning.
- ★ Leadership that guides efforts to continuously strengthen and improve instruction and student and community outcomes.
- ★ Effective, integrated learning opportunities that prepare students for college, career and civic life and facilitate realization of the civic mission of schools.

The open doors of the P-20 Schoolhouse further reflect several guiding principles:

- ★ The entire P-20 system shares responsibility for implementing a seamless approach for students' civic learning.
- ★ Learning occurs both inside and outside of schools; the community is a valuable asset to student learning, and students are a valuable asset in supporting health and vibrancy of their communities.

Each floor of the P-20 Schoolhouse is critical in supporting the desired outcome of readiness for college, career and civic life. Like any building, the second floor can't exist without the first, just as strong instructional programs can't exist without a clear intention of engagement or the involvement of youth voice.

The following sections include descriptions of key elements that support the fulfillment of the P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy. These elements are grouped into three broad categories:

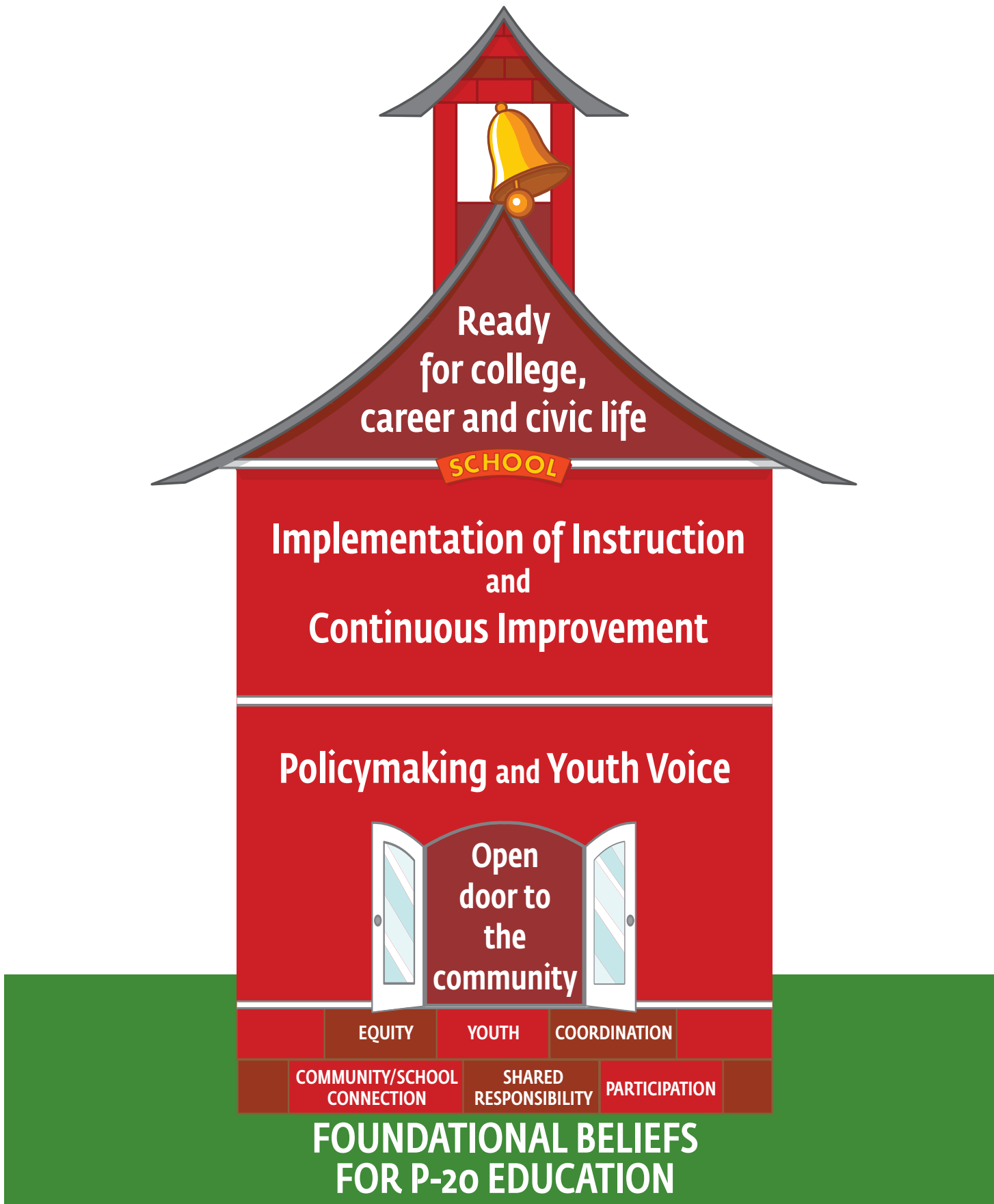
- ★ Instruction.
- ★ Continuous improvement and accountability.
- ★ Strategies for policy development and implementation.

The guidelines provided in these sections represent the best ideas of civic education leaders and are informed by leading research on civic education. The Framework recommendations, therefore, are somewhat idealistic. Political realities and fiscal constraints in states likely will limit the extent to which any state may fully adopt the recommendations. The examples of policies included allow those who wish to use the Framework to see how some states have already made progress toward the ideals embodied here, as well as how they may be adopted in whole or in part and adapted to local circumstances.

“Indeed, education institutions will more completely fulfill their broad purposes when they focus on preparing students for college, career and civic life.”



P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy





INSTRUCTION

A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements of instruction:

- ★ Standards and curricula for civic education at each grade level, P-20.
- ★ Inquiry-based instruction that results in demonstration of learning and informed action.
- ★ Integration of civic learning across all academic disciplines.
- ★ Teachers at all levels and in all subject areas who are well prepared to address civic learning in their classrooms.

Today's best practices for civic learning are far from the textbook-based high school civics classes that were dominant 25 years ago. Educators now have a better understanding that active civic learning — rather than just textbook learning — is essential to meeting the civic purposes of public education. Contemporary approaches to civic education, such as the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3 Framework), which was developed by 15 professional organizations in the social studies field, call for consistent yet flexible student-centered and inquiry-based curricula and standards.⁹

POLICY GOAL

Research shows that one of the most significant ways that schools can foster youth civic engagement is by providing students with opportunities to engage in reflective civic action through their classes, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.¹⁰ As recommended in the C3 Framework, educators need training and professional development to provide resources for an engaging pedagogical model that includes:

- ★ Developing questions and planning inquiries.
- ★ Applying disciplinary tools and concepts.
- ★ Evaluating sources and using evidence.
- ★ Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.¹¹

This model is built on the recognition that, “Engagement in civic life requires knowledge and experience; children learn to be citizens by working individually and together as citizens.”¹² Such a model serves as a guide to improve teaching quality, an important factor to consider as states develop educator effectiveness policies.

RATIONALE

While states may acknowledge the importance of teacher effectiveness and civic learning in policy, in recent decades “civic education as a formal part of the curriculum that is translated into effective instruction just does not exist in many schools.”¹³ Short-term interventions are insufficient for developing quality instructional practices or preparing students for a lifetime of civic participation. Rather than a single course in civics during a student's senior year, educators must provide civic learning activities from preschool through college, informed by best practices that develop:

- ★ Civic knowledge, including knowledge of our systems of government and how it works.
- ★ Civic skills, including intellectual and participatory skills necessary for active civic life.
- ★ Civic dispositions and personal efficacy, including “interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues and behaviors.”¹⁴



Opportunities for students to engage in real-world learning activities can enhance the civic development of students and provide more authentic learning experiences. Research suggests that educators who base their pedagogy on providing these opportunities may better help students achieve greater levels of academic success and increased motivation.¹⁵ As suggested throughout this paper, states can help to ensure that schools provide such opportunities for all students through the standards they set and the assessments and accountability measures they choose.

FULFILLING THE GOAL

Civic learning is neither unidirectional (from teacher to student) nor is it tied to only one discipline or context; it must exist across a broad set of political and civic issues through active learning strategies. Successful implementation of engaging, student-centered curricula and standards requires well-prepared educators. Important components of professional development and teacher preparation that support the successful implementation of civics curricula include:

- ★ Mastering methods of engaged pedagogies and student-centered learning across academic disciplines.
- ★ Understanding how to use high-quality reflection and relevant assessment tools.
- ★ Fostering a tolerant educational climate.
- ★ Developing P-20 partnerships.
- ★ Leveraging community resources in support of civic engagement.

Teacher preparation and ongoing professional development embedded with the above elements builds a multi-faceted support network for students and enables student-centered learning throughout schools and in communities.





EXAMPLES

While state policy can drive instructional approaches, most states leave such decisions to school districts. Therefore, the following examples focus on the school and system level. They illustrate student-centered learning and engaged civic participation. Illinois' Democracy Schools demonstrate how local efforts can inspire state policy from the bottom up.

Democracy Schools, Illinois

<http://www.mccormickfoundation.org/page.aspx?pid=983>

Illinois' Democracy Schools promote and strengthen civic education through a systemwide initiative focused on secondary schools. The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC) awards the distinction of "Democracy School" to schools that show a deep commitment to civic learning and the state's commitment to civic education is reflected by the increase in the number of Democracy Schools from four in 2006 to 22 in 2013.

Supported by the McCormick Foundation, Democracy Schools are part of a formalized network of teachers and administrators who, through sharing their experiences, strengthen their practices and help students better understand how civic education relates to the current challenges and controversies in their schools and beyond. To become a Democracy School, a team of faculty members and administrators must apply to ICMC. The application process includes a schoolwide civic assessment that shows evidence of how the school's courses, activities and policies offer high-quality civic learning opportunities. In addition to building a case for Democracy School recognition, prospective schools must identify gaps and articulate strategies to improve the quantity, quality and access to civic learning at the school. The McCormick Foundation civic program helps schools with the application by providing liaisons who can guide teams through the process.

While Democracy Schools were created without the directive of state law, they inspired a bottom-up approach to policy. Inspired by Democracy Schools, **Senate Resolution 149** (2011) encourages all Illinois' secondary schools to become Democracy Schools and requires that each district's report cards identify which schools are Democracy Schools and which are not.¹⁶

Constitution High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

<http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/schools/c/constitution>

Constitution High School is a citywide magnet school in Philadelphia. It employs an engaged pedagogy that teaches students active citizenship through participation and agency in school governance. A student house of representatives and faculty senate create and write laws, giving students a voice in their school and the power to affect change.¹⁷ The school's mission states that, "by engaging students with an appreciation for history and an understanding of the democratic principles embodied in the United States Constitution, this college preparatory high school will develop the next generation of engaged citizens and civic leaders in government, public policy and law."¹⁸



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

“Testing and accountability generally pose a dilemma for civic education. If we don’t test civic knowledge and skills, they become afterthoughts in education, especially in schools where lots of kids are at risk of failing the subjects that are tested.” ~ Peter Levine¹⁹

Thinkers’ Meeting participants identified the following elements of continuous improvement and accountability as critical components to a comprehensive state civic education policy:

- ★ Assessments of student progress toward civic learning outcomes used both for individual students and aggregated for subgroups of students that include some combination of the following:
 - Traditional standardized tests.
 - Alternative/authentic assessments (e.g., essays, projects, posters, presentations, etc.).
 - Experiential and project-based learning, including service-learning and action civics.
- ★ Accountability indicators of teachers, school and district performance, such as:
 - Student surveys (e.g., attitudes and dispositions, behaviors and practices, educator behaviors, school climate, etc.).
 - Educator surveys (e.g., regarding school climate, administrator supports, etc.).
 - Number and types of pre-service and in-service opportunities offered and taken.
 - Educator evaluations on indicators related to civic education (e.g., whether an educator supports open and respectful discourse in his/her classroom).
 - School-level measures (e.g., attendance, on-time graduation, bullying rates, etc.).
- ★ Measures of community involvement, including:
 - Community surveys (e.g., regarding student contributions to community, connection to the school, etc.).
 - Broader measures of community civic health (e.g., Civic Health Index).

The above elements are necessary for a continuous feedback cycle that supports the improvement of civic education outcomes for all students. Accountability measures have become more and more important in recent years as pressure has increased from policymakers and parents to understand how well schools are supporting student progress. Changes in school accountability policy require education leaders — now more than ever — to analyze which measures best signal the quality of civic education and how that information is used to support student and school performance.

POLICY GOAL

Ideally, continuous improvement is the ultimate goal that drives accountability models to improve student learning and system effectiveness. Successful models require multiple measures from multiple perspectives, captured by the elements above. Robust data allow policymakers and school leaders to make well-informed decisions to improve student achievement and develop effective feedback cycles for continuous improvement efforts.



RATIONALE

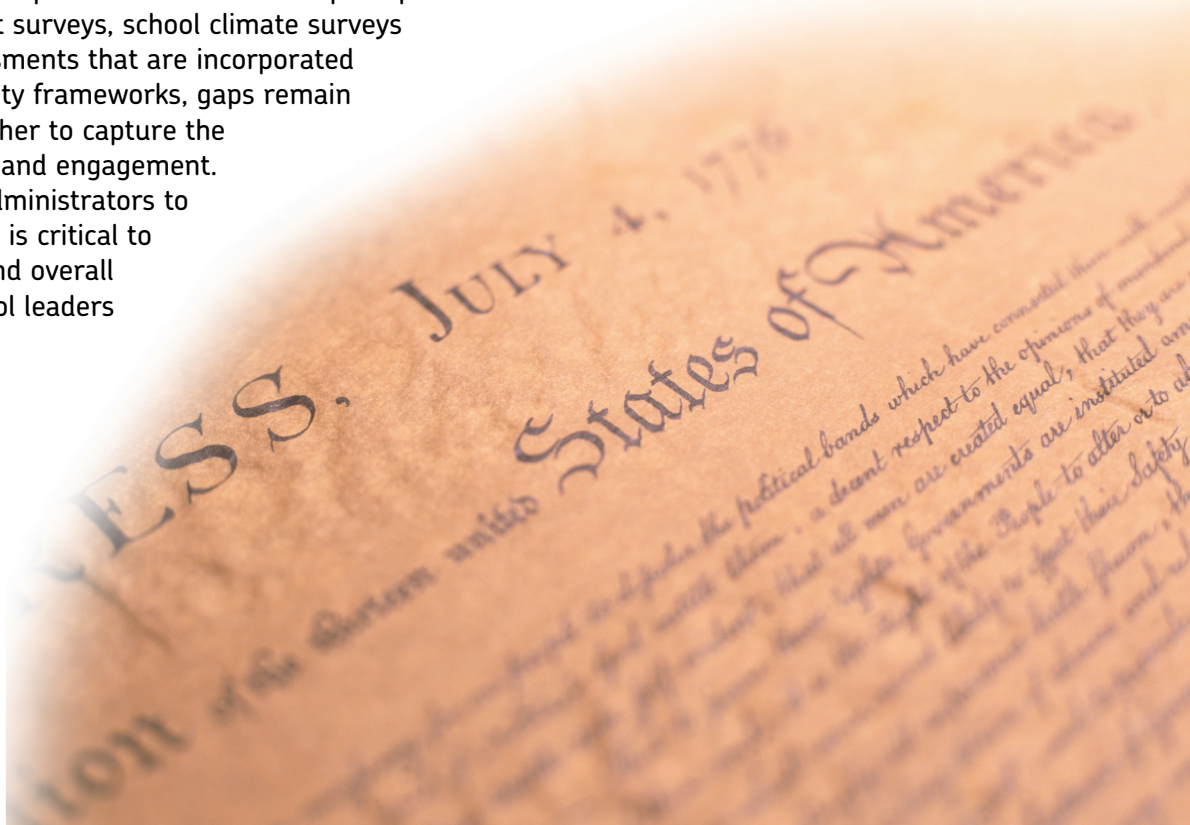
Well-designed assessments that have academic consequences have the potential to increase students' political knowledge. Assessments of civic learning have been shown to have a bearing on gains in students' civic knowledge, particularly among African American, Hispanic and immigrant youth.²⁰ Although high-stakes assessments and accountability measures are contentious issues across the education sector, the inclusion of civic education in state accountability policies may help to ensure that all students develop necessary civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Further, such policies likely send the message that "preparation for active, informed citizenship is the co-equal purpose of education along with preparation for higher education and career."²¹

While traditional standardized testing is concrete in nature and can provide an accurate assessment of civic knowledge, performance-based assessments and qualitative indicators provide an important supplement to measure higher-order thinking skills and provide a more complete understanding of students' progress toward developing civic skills and dispositions. Therefore, a variety of assessment tools that measure the above civic outcomes, as well as broader school and community outcomes, are extremely useful for establishing favorable precedent for civic education, recognizing pockets of excellent practice and developing programs geared toward continuous improvement.

FULFILLING THE GOAL

An ECS 50-state civics policy scan shows that while all states have some requirement for civic education, only about half of the states assess student progress in this area and even fewer hold schools accountable for such learning.²² While assessment tools may take different forms, valid metrics are necessary if policymakers are to implement meaningful feedback loops and school improvement plans that parents and others can trust.

Although some states have implemented teacher and principal evaluation systems, student surveys, school climate surveys and/or social studies assessments that are incorporated into school and accountability frameworks, gaps remain in tying these metrics together to capture the big picture of civic learning and engagement. Preparing educators and administrators to use assessments effectively is critical to continuous improvement and overall accountability efforts. School leaders and educators need clear, succinct resources on the impact and importance of accountability measures.



EXAMPLES

Utah

Utah requires all districts and charter schools to submit annual reports to the lieutenant governor and Commission on Civic and Character Education. These reports must summarize how civic and character education are achieved in the school districts or charter schools through an integrated school curriculum and in the regular course of schoolwork (Utah Code Ann. § 53A-13-109). Further, the state board of education is required to report annually on how schools in the state are preparing students to “become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated curriculum taught in connection with regular school work.” (Utah Code Ann. § 53A-13-109[6])

Florida

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, Florida will administer the first statewide civics end-of-course assessment (EOC). The civics EOC will count as 30 percent of the student’s grade (Fla. Stat. § 1008.22(3)(c)(2)(b)). Assessment results are included in each school’s accountability indicator (Fla. Stat. §1008.34(3)(c)(1)). Practice tests can be viewed through the Florida Department of Education’s ePAT site. While the EOC is the only legislated civic assessment, districts and schools also may choose to add their own alternative assessments. As reported in a recent American Enterprise Institute study, well-designed civic assessments that have academic consequences have the greatest impact on increasing political knowledge.²³

Tennessee

As a result of Tennessee **House Bill 2114** (2011), beginning with the 2012-13 school year, all school districts were required to implement a project-based assessment in civics at least once in grades 4 through 8, and at least once in grades 9 through 12. (Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1028[d]). Tennessee is the first state to use projects for statewide assessment of civic education, an important step toward a more comprehensive assessment.

Tennessee’s policy is a clear example of how an assessment policy can reinforce the instructional practices outlined in the previous section of this paper. Projects must be student-influenced and involve an inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions. They promote a hands-on, practical approach to learning. Students work to develop solutions to the issues they are studying. According to a report by the Tennessee comptroller, project-based civic assessments differ from other state-mandated assessments because they are not standardized tests developed by vendors, but instead are to be developed and implemented by school districts. The law allows the Tennessee Department of Education to seek assistance from appropriate outside entities, including the Tennessee Center for Civic Learning and Engagement, to assist with professional development on the use of project-based assessments of civic learning. The General Assembly appropriated a one-time allocation of \$100,000 to implement Public Chapter No. 1036.²⁴

A variety of assessments are available for states to use to measure students’ civic learning and engagement (see Appendix 5). While some measure political knowledge, others attempt to measure school environment and levels of civic participation.



STRATEGY FOR POLICY ENACTMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Most civic education initiatives begin with ambitious goals and good intentions. These goals are hard to accomplish without adequate time, resources and direction. Sustained engagement and targeted resources are critical in empowering marginalized groups who rarely have time to participate or to translate civic education into political, economic or social gains.²⁵

The Thinkers' Meeting brought together various stakeholders to develop suggestions for how states can drive improvement in civic learning outcomes for all students, P-20. The guidelines outlined in this report, either implemented gradually over time or with a few broad strokes, can help shift the culture of schools and communities to engage and empower individuals. Regardless of speed of adoption, a well-thought-out plan for policy enactment and implementation is critical to these tasks. With this in mind, meeting participants developed the following strategies for policy enactment and implementation:

- ★ **Frame the issue:** Clarify why the issue is important and be able to communicate to a variety of audiences: parents, families, students, the business community and policymakers.
- ★ **Develop a campaign plan:** Outline leadership and management structures, an outreach plan with clear timelines and accountability measures that identify evidence of success and areas of improvement.
- ★ **Build institutional supports:** Identify and secure an institutional “home” to operationalize the campaign. Key institutions may be: nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, state or jurisdictional departments of education, or governmental institutions.
- ★ **Recruit a bipartisan/nonpartisan coalition:** Engage a politically neutral but diverse coalition that reaches out to new constituencies.
- ★ **Find champions of civic education:** Consider high-profile advocates who are politically palatable, can build a constituency and can balance each other.
- ★ **Ongoing support and capacity building:** Create a plan for research, evaluation and continued support.

Historically, civic initiatives have not been considered a major priority in the greater landscape of education policy. Creating a hunger for civics is of great importance to achieving success. This hunger may come from a bottom-up approach, one that generates continuous dialogue with the public and presents a clear objective that is achievable, measurable and timely.



STATE EXAMPLES

The Florida College System Civics Literacy Initiative

Pointing to research that ties together academic performance and civic education, the Florida College System (FCS) Civics Literacy Initiative was inspired and championed by former Florida Gov. and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham. He gained the support of all 28 of the state's colleges, as well as stakeholders across the political spectrum.²⁶

The initiative is housed at the St. Petersburg College Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions and strives to:

- ★ Develop models to integrate civic literacy into cross-curriculum coursework.
- ★ Survey the FCS for best practices and establish an on-going clearinghouse to measure progress and share successes.
- ★ Embed civic literacy in the mission statements of the colleges in the FCS.
- ★ Develop a FCS Model Legislature.
- ★ Develop strategies to promote civic engagement among domestic and international immigrants and other special populations.²⁷

The initiative has been well received, and the college presidents continue to move forward in implementing its goals.

The Massachusetts Commission on Civic Learning and Engagement

As mandated by Senate Resolve 222 (2011), the Massachusetts Commission on Civic Learning and Engagement examined ways to improve civic learning in elementary and secondary education, higher education and adult education.²⁸ The final report advanced the state's civic mission by framing the issue, analyzing current civic initiatives and providing the legislature with recommendations for civic education frameworks. This commitment has been transformed into actionable policies, including the nation's first statewide civic learning outcomes for public institutions of higher education.²⁹

The Virginia Commission on Civics Education

Virginia approved its Commission on Civics Education (H.B. 364) in March 2014. Goals include educating students on the "importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic" and generally promoting the study of state and local government. The commission will submit an annual report to the governor and the General Assembly in addition to a review of its analysis and recommendations.



CONCLUSION

Far too often, civic education opportunities are minimized as schools prepare their students for math and reading standardized exams. One of the goals of this project was to foster a re-imagining of the structure of our education system so that civic education emerges as a priority, equally as important as college and career readiness. As *A Crucible Moment* declares, “It is time to bring two national priorities — career preparation and increased access and completion rates — together in a more comprehensive vision with a third national priority: fostering informed, engaged, responsible citizens.”³⁰

To this end, NCLCE will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to:

- ★ Share the research and data critical to improving civic education from pre-K to postsecondary.
- ★ Identify policies that support civic education.
- ★ Offer technical assistance to states.

NCLCE recognizes a profound opportunity to work together with partner organizations to improve civic education in ways that will resonate for years. NCLCE’s network is built on mutual trust and a clear vision of creating positive changes together so that all students, pre-K through postsecondary, have the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to participate effectively in democratic life and contribute to their communities.

The appendices to this paper include numerous resources aimed at reinvigorating the civic mission of schools. We invite you to contact our center, as well, for support with civic education policymaking in your state.



APPENDIX 1

CIVIC EDUCATION DEFINED

The term *civic learning* is used to emphasize the civic significance of preparing students with knowledge and for action. Today's education for democracy needs to be informed by deep engagement with the values of liberty, equality, individual worth, open-mindedness and the willingness to collaborate with people of differing views and backgrounds toward common solutions for the public good.³¹ These qualities are not automatically transmitted to the next generation — they must be passed down through schools. Ultimately, schools are the guardians of democracy.³²

CIVIC COMPETENCIES

Civic competency includes not only civic knowledge, but also civic skills and dispositions.

- ★ **Civic Content Knowledge:** Civic content includes both core knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge to different circumstances and settings.
- ★ **Civic Skills – Intellectual:** Intellectual civic skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze and explain matters of concern in civic life.
- ★ **Civic Skills – Participatory:** Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to cope in groups and organizational settings, interface with elected officials and community representatives, communicate perspectives and arguments, and plan strategically for civic change.
- ★ **Civic Dispositions:** Civic dispositions encompass interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues and behaviors (respect for others, commitment to equality, capacity for listening, capacity to communicate in ways accessible to others, etc.).³³

THE SIX PROVEN PRACTICES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

- ★ **Classroom instruction:** Schools should provide instruction in government, history, economics, law and democracy.
- ★ **Discussion of current events and controversial issues:** Schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
- ★ **Service-learning:** Schools should design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
- ★ **Extracurricular activities:** Schools should offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom.
- ★ **School governance:** Schools should encourage student participation in school governance.
- ★ **Simulations of democratic processes:** Schools should encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.³⁴



APPENDIX 2

CIVIC ASSESSMENT DATA

Results from NAEP show students across all grade levels have a less-than-adequate grasp of the skills and knowledge necessary to engage as citizens. For example:

- ★ Only one-third of Americans could name all three branches of government; one-third couldn't name any.
- ★ Just over a third thought that it was the intention of the Founding Fathers to have each branch hold a lot of power, but the president has the final say.
- ★ Just under half of Americans (47 percent) knew that a 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court carries the same legal weight as a 9-0 ruling.
- ★ Almost a third mistakenly believed that a U.S. Supreme Court ruling could be appealed.
- ★ When the Supreme Court divides 5-4, roughly one in four (23 percent) believed the decision was referred to Congress for resolution; 16 percent thought it needed to be sent back to the lower courts.³⁵

APPENDIX 3

CIVIC EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE STATES

State Policy	Number of States
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state standards	All states and the District of Columbia
Civics or citizenship education included in curriculum frameworks	44 states and the District of Columbia
Civics or citizenship education included as high school graduation requirement	All states and the District of Columbia
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in other state statutes	48 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state administrative codes	24 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state assessments	33 states
Social studies included as a required state assessment	23 states
Social studies included as a test students are required to pass in order to graduate high school	10 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state accountability system	24 states

Source: Molly Ryan and Paul Baumann, *Legislative Updates*, Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2013), <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/08/99/10899.pdf> (accessed September 19, 2014), 1-2.



APPENDIX 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS FROM THE *CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS REPORT*³⁶

- ★ Send a strong message that preparation for active, informed citizenship is the co-equal purpose of education along with preparation for higher education and career (as is stated in most states' constitutions or education establishment codes). State policies should be aligned accordingly.
- ★ Work together to develop common state standards and assessments in the social studies through a state-led effort.
- ★ Hold schools and districts accountable for student civic learning achievement by including civic learning in state assessments and accountability measures.
- ★ Combat the narrowing of the curriculum that reduces civic learning, especially in low-performing schools.
- ★ Include civic learning in broader education reform efforts.
- ★ Review existing standards in social studies to ensure they are meaningful, focused, realistic and reflect thoughtful priorities for civic learning.
- ★ Ensure the inclusion of the proven practices in this report in all schools in the state.
- ★ Identify and include indicators/metrics for state longitudinal data systems specific to civic learning.
- ★ Include social studies/civic learning in district and school "report cards" and other public reports of school achievement.
- ★ Strengthen pre-service and licensure/accreditation requirements for social studies/civic learning teachers to ensure mastery of subject matter and confidence in use of the proven practices in this report.
- ★ Require and support high-quality ongoing professional development for all social studies/civic learning teachers.
- ★ Ensure that civic learning is taught at each grade level, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach.
- ★ Fully fund civic learning, even if that means reallocating other resources if necessary to meet the essential civic mission of schools.



APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

- ★ *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)*: Measures multiple elements, including an orderly school environment parent/community involvement, collaboration within the school and instructional practices. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php>
- ★ *California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)*: Assesses school connectedness, opportunities for meaningful participation and perceptions of safety across elementary, middle and high school. <http://chks.wested.org>
- ★ *Communities That Care Youth Survey*: Gathers data on school, community, family, and peer risk and protective factors related to perceptions of school climate. <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/CTC020/CTC020.pdf>
- ★ *Colorado's social studies assessments*: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/newassess-sum>
- ★ *NCLCE Civic Assessment Database*: The database contains questions categorized by national civics standards that have been juried by civic learning experts for their clarity and meaningfulness in relation to the competencies of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. http://www.ecs.org/Qna/splash_new.asp



APPENDIX 6

THINKERS' MEETING ATTENDEES

August 11-13, 2014 | Denver, Colorado

Susan Abravanel

President, Susan Abravanel Consulting, LLC

Kelita Svoboda Bak

CEO, National Youth Leadership Council

Lisa Bardwell

President & CEO, Earth Force

Lyla Berg

Founder, Kids Voting Hawaii

John Bonaiuto

Former Director, Nebraska Association of School Boards

Mary Ellen Daneels

Teacher, West Chicago Community High School

James Dillard

Virginia State Board of Education, Chair, Virginia Commission on Civic Education

Doug Dobson

Executive Director, The Lou Frey Institute

Barbara Ferman

Professor of Political Science, Director, University Community Collaborative, Temple University

Bill Fulton

Founder and Executive Director, The Civic Canopy

Karen Gross

President, Southern Vermont College

Shawn Healy

Civic Learning and Engagement Scholar, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Michelle Herczog

President, National Council for the Social Studies

Deion Jordan

Student, Connecticut College

Andrew Kerr

Senator, State of Colorado

John McCarthy

Executive Director, Future Civic Leaders

Les Francis

Chair, Federal Policy Task Force, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

Barbara Miller

Executive Director, Center for Education in Law and Democracy

Connor Pfeiffer

Student, Princeton University

David Skaggs

Former U.S. Congressman

Stephanie Schooley

Executive Director, Campus Compact of the Mountain West

Andrew Seligsohn

President, Campus Compact

Britt Wilkenfeld

Strategic Data Fellow, Colorado Department of Education

Paul Baumann

Director, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States

Brady Delander

Communications Specialist, Education Commission of the States

Lisa Guilfoile

Project Specialist, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States

Maria Millard

Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States

Leslie Hamdorf

Intern, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States



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